

The Friendly Visitor November 2026

Newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church and Community



Grace Lutheran Church:

- *A community of faith, centered in worship, held in Grace, strengthened in love, sent forth in mission, in Jesus' name.*
- *Home of the Being New Spirituality Center.*

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Submission deadline for the December newsletter: Monday, November 16

Office & Open Building Hours

9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Monday – Thursday

Or by appointment

The office will be closed

Monday & Tuesday October 26 & 27

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Worship: In-person & Online

10:00 a.m. Fellowship & Coffee

10:15 a.m. Education Hour or monthly service project

Grace Lutheran Church
5201 Urbandale Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515-276-6873

gracedm.org

Trees



This is a time of year when many people start to pay attention to the trees around us. I look at trees all year round. On a recent walk around Luther College's campus, I took this picture. I may have been teased a little bit for stopping and taking in the wonder of a seemingly normal tree. Truth be told, I stop and look at trees a lot. My family has a series of pictures of me staring at or pointing at trees, whether from walks or vacations.

What intrigues me the most is the way that trees will grow toward the light. Trees will adjust so that the branches find the light and grow. In the picture, the one branch grows down not about 8 inches off the ground before growing up. That is where it found the light. There was no sense in it staying where there was no light in sight and no growth. Trees are resilient.

We may look at that and think, "Well, duh. It's a tree. That's what it is supposed to do." I agree. But it also makes me wonder why we as people do not do the same. Often, we know where the light is, but we choose something else.

Trees, continued on Page 3

For the saints who from their labors now rest...

*Elijah Torres
Barb Powers
Frank McKinney*

“When sorrow's heavy hand has weighted loss against the greater gain, pinning down that grief sore fated laden on the bed of pain.

Refrain

Turning eyes now to their shining mem'ry, to their faithful past, saints be now the truth divining: death be now but never last.”

Death Be Never Last – All Creation Sings 1030, Stanza 2, Text: Ray Makeever

As I reflect on these saints who from their labors now rest, and pray for their families, I am reminded of something that a friend once told me. This friend is a pastor who served near me in Sioux City. Before entering seminary, he was a funeral director. One day, while grieving the loss of someone we both knew, he simply said, “There are two kinds of people in the world: those we grieve with hope, and those who do not.” These are words that I have often thought about on days like this.

We hold these families, and all who have experienced loss, in our prayers. May we support one another in our grief, while knowing that we do not grieve without hope.

In Christ,
Pastor Mike

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Birthdays!

- 1 Remington Anderson
Pam Palmer
- 5 Sally Thielking
- 6 Benjamin Gronert
Ralph Watson
- 8 Austin Schaller
- 12 Zoe Lawson
- 13 Kurt Bowermaster
Jasey Bradwell
Zachary Jensen
- 14 Linda Moravec
- 15 Amy Batten
John Justice
Mark Ridnour
- 16 Haley Dostalick
- 17 Jeremy Israel
Gloria Moon
Madison Robbins
- 19 Nick Medhurst
Greg Ruckdaschel
- 21 Kelley Riordan
- 22 Zachary Kulzer
- 24 Jon Rissman
- 25 Kerry Riordan
- 26 Jessica Rissman
Paul Thielking
Virginia Wangerin
Carol Woodruff
- 29 Angie Hidalgo
Ed Ridnour

Anniversaries!

- 2 Richard and Deanna Snyder
- 7 Paul and Alexson Calahan
- 11 Gabe and Kelley Brown
- 13 **Amy and Ellen Batten** are



celebrating 50 years of marriage! They will not be having a party, so let's shower them with a card party and celebrate with them! You can find their address in the directory, or leave a card at the office for them.



Dear Grace family,

September and October have been months of both sorrow and joy for my family and me. I am deeply grateful for your prayers, care, and support as we grieve the death of my stepbrother, who will finally be laid to rest on October 31. Thank you also for holding us in prayer as we mourn the loss of my grandfather. Your kindness reminds me that we do not carry grief alone.

Alongside this sorrow, we will celebrate my youngest son Daniel's birthday on October 23. His birthday gives me a reason to pause with gratitude for his life and the joy he brings to our family. I am learning again how grief and celebration can share space in our hearts.

As we explore the stories of women in the New Testament, I continue to reflect on Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4. Jesus meets her in an ordinary place and enters into a conversation that opens new possibilities. Her invitation to her community, "Come and see", reminds me of the ways we can welcome one another into relationships of faith and care.

Grace family, thank you for being a community where I can bring both sorrow and joy. Through your prayers, conversations, and presence, you continue to shape the pastor I am becoming. May we keep making room for one another's stories, trusting that Christ meets us in all we carry.

With gratitude, Vicar Apou

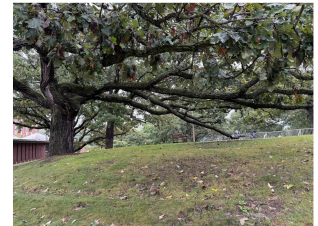
Trees, continued from Page 1

This can be a variety of things. Right now, I look at the way the world is absolutely gripped by an ugly and aggressive election cycle. Chat bots from other parts of the globe are keeping people stuck in a mindset of fear and anger, stuck where there is no light.

As you look at the trees and the leaves, pause and look at the branches too. Look at the way that trees find light and continue to grow. They shift with the environment, never losing sight of the light. Then, learn from these examples all around us. Look to the light, the very love of God.

In Christ,

Pastor Mike



We hold the following in our hearts and prayers:

The family of Sharon Curry



2026 Stewardship Campaign Pre-Announcement

The 2026 Stewardship campaign will be starting shortly. Please keep your eyes open in your mail for the stewardship materials. Thank you!

If you don't receive yours by November 8, please contact the office. There will be a Conversation with Council about this years' Stewardship and budget during Education Hour that day. Commitment Sunday will be November 15.

Fall 2026 Schedule

Bible and Ethics Study Groups–

- The Tuesday Fall Ethics Study will NOT meet Tuesday, October 26. We will resume on Nov. 3. We will remain in the ethics study for several more weeks.
- Wednesday Ethics Study group, 5:30 p.m. in room 102 downstairs. We will be finishing up our Ethics study this week. Currently there is no plan to move onto another study.
- Thursday Bible Study group, 6:30 p.m. in room 102 downstairs. We will be finishing up our Ethics study this week, and moving into Revelations the first week in November.

Chancel Choir Rehearsals

We meet in the music room below Grace Hall at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

All singers are welcome to join us!

Elementary Sunday School

Sundays at 10:15 a.m. K-5 students meet in the Sunday School room, across from the elevator just up the stairs from the Gathering Hall.

Sunday Morning Adult Education – Women of the New Testament and more!

Middle and high schoolers are considered as adults for Sunday education!

Sundays at 10:15 a.m. in Grace Hall, after worship and coffeetime.

October 25: Women of the New Testament.

November 1: Women of the New Testament

November 8: Conversation with Council – Budget and Finance

November 15: Women of the New Testament

November 22: All Ages Service Project – preparing our annual Christmas Gift Bag. Reach out to Jill Boeschen and Cathy Watson if you or your committee want to contribute an item!

Confirmation Classes

We will NOT meet on Wednesday, October 28. Classes usually meet Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in room 102 downstairs.



Exploring Grace With Pastor Mike Sundays October 25, November 29

A warm invitation to learn about our community, faith, and life together.

Welcome! **Exploring Grace** is an opportunity for you to get answers about us and find out about what being a part of Grace might look like for you. Pastor Mike offers this opportunity through the year, we'll announce our 2027 dates in upcoming newsletters. Or simply reach out to the office to meet with Pastor Mike at a time that works for you!

If you are interested in learning more about Grace and how you fit in, please contact the office at 515-276-6873, or email Pastor Mike Mike@gracedm.org. We welcome you!

All- Ages Service Project. Join us on November 22nd after worship for our All Ages Service Project as we assemble our Annual Christmas Gift Bags.





**Fall Back Date 2026:
Sunday, November 1**

Move your clocks BACK one hour before bed on Saturday night, and enjoy that extra hour of sleep!

Coming Together for the Harvest

Grace was officially recognized as a Reconciling in Christ Congregation in January but our work is not done. TeamGRACE wants to continue the energy into the future and one of the ways we want to do that is by creating casual time to be together in fellowship. Please join TeamGRACE as we come together to celebrate the harvest with a dessert reception on Saturday, November 7th from 2pm-4pm in Grace Hall. Spiced hot apple cider and desserts will be served. We are looking for volunteers to bring their favorite treat to share. Please email Jessica@gracedm.org if you plan on bringing a treat.

Exodus 23:16: You shall observe the Festival of Harvest, of the first fruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall observe the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor.

TeamGrace

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we all have stories that give meaning to our lives and decisions. If you have a story you would like to share, please let us know. We, in the Team, have shared how our experiences led us to our understandings and beliefs.



We are sharing information from Biblical scholars throughout 2026 as several members of Grace requested Bible verses to support acceptance of LBGTQ+.

New Testament: Romans 14:13

Therefore, Let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

Ephesians 4:32

Be ye kind, one unto another, tenderhearted, forgiving one other, even as God, through Christ, has forgiven you.

Mathew 7:1

Judge not lest ye be judged.

Takeaway:

As a warning against hypocritical condemnation, we will be judged by the same standards we use for others. It is better not to judge. Self-reflection should come before judgment; it is easy to ignore the log in one's eye while judging the speck in others'.



Thank You!

A heartfelt thank you doesn't hardly seem adequate for the cards, visits, phone calls, and prayers during my recent health challenges. Grace is special because of its people and that has been proven again! Thanks again! Kevin Drury

A huge thank you goes out to my Grace family during my health scare that started a year ago. My 6 month hospital stay was a very long journey & I appreciated the prayers, cards & visits. I truly am a miracle walking. Linda Gronert

Little Free Pantry Request for November:

Thanksgiving themed items: stuffing, green beans, corn, potatoes, and pumpkin

The [Grace LFP Amazon Wish List](#) is also available to have items shipped to the church. Donations can also be made online through the [GIVE](#) page or send a check payable to Grace Lutheran Church with "Little Free Pantry" in the memo. Your donations are greatly appreciated.



Companion Congregation Committee

We have re-created our committee to build companionship between our congregations, Grace here in Des Moines, Iowa, and Msindo, in the South Pare Mountains of Tanzania. The Tanzanian parishes often consist of several locations served by one pastor; Pastor Manongi has a three point parish including Msindo, Mararo, and Paradiso. Although Pastor Lotegeluaki is no longer on our staff, he promised to assist us with translations. Aggrey Mleli who now lives in Dar es Salaam and works for the education department, was a student when we first visited Msindo and he said he will also help with translations.

Our first task was to find our original contract and review it. We are introducing the committee members at Grace and hope we will get a similar response of a short bio and picture from Tanzania committee members.

We are praying for each other and will write letters and share projects.

Pastor Manongi has expressed an interest in doing a project together to have fundraisers to provide lunches for needy children at school. Stay tuned for the next steps in our relationship and project.

If you are interested in being part of the committee, please let us know---we always welcome new members to our companionship.

Companion Congregation Committee

Grace Lutheran Church 100th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, May 22, 2027: Building Tours during the day.
Catered Banquet in the evening at Stoney Creek Inn.

Sunday, May 23, 2027: Worship in the Sanctuary at Grace!

Are you keeping up with the historical Trivia in the Tuesday enews? Thank you to Janet Trentmann and Cherie Rissman for their work in assembling these cool facts about Grace! Sign up at our website – just scroll down on the front page at www.gracedm.com to keep up with the news and trivia !

An Attitude of Gratitude

This is a reprint from Contemplative Corner November 2024

You may be thinking, “Yeah, yeah, yeah. I’ve read all about this. There’s already plenty going on in my life. How can I possibly squeeze in yet another thing on my “To Do” list?” Well, sometimes we need to be reminded of the obvious. Despite the cliché title, be encouraged to keep reading!



The Hebrew term for gratitude is ***Hakarat Ha Tov***. It literally means “recognizing the good”.¹ Although the expression doesn’t exist in Biblical Hebrew, there are hundreds of mentions of the words “thanks” and “gratitude” in the Bible. Paul tells us in Colossians 3:15-17 (NRSV) to be thankful not just once but three times!

Developing an “attitude of gratitude” doesn’t have to involve a lot of time (unless you want it to); however, it will take some mindful effort your part...and the rewards are more than worth it. Anyone else in for more calm, less anxiety, lower blood pressure, more restful sleep? Yes, please!

The following is just a small sampling of ideas...try one (or more!) then get creative with your own.

- G—Give of your time and volunteer for an organization you’re interested in. There are options right here at Grace, like becoming a greeter on Sunday or getting to know our companion congregation in Tanzania. You may be surprised YOU get more out of the time spent than those you serve!
- R—Random acts of kindness. Hold a door for someone. Pay for a stranger’s coffee. Say “Good morning” to someone in the elevator. Expect nothing in return.
- A—Adjust your perspective. There WILL be times when being grateful is hard. Write 3 things you’re grateful for each day in a journal or add a slip of paper to a happiness jar. Look back periodically over what you’ve recorded to continue to appreciate all the good in your life.
- T—Thank you. It may only be 2 small words, but the ripple effect is enormous. Thank your loved ones and those in your community (i.e. teacher, barista, postal worker). Write an on-line positive review for a small business you’ve visited.
- I—Infectious positivity. It takes more muscles to frown than it does to smile so why not smile more? Bless your daily irritations (like that car that cut you off on the freeway). Limit the negativity by restricting media time and apps.
- T—Try a contemplative practice. Check out Preparation for Worship at 8:30 in the Upper Room on Sunday mornings. The Being New Spirituality Center at Grace also offers a variety of events—from yoga and Reiki to Soul Collage and centering prayer and more. There’s apt to be something of interest to you.
- U—U = you. Applaud what your body does for you every day rather than criticizing what it doesn’t. Thank your eyes for allowing you to read a book by your favorite author. Give praise for your voice to be able to sing along with the radio. Bless your hands for making a meal for your family or to be able to hold your grandchild’s or spouse’s hand.
- D—Drop a written note to a distant relative or friend to let them know how much you appreciate them. Better yet, give them a call or pay them a visit too!
- E—Explore the outdoors. Get that “Vitamin N” (nature) in by taking a leisurely walk around the neighborhood or local park. Sit in your backyard and silently listen and/or watch all that’s going on around you.

A word of thanks if you’ve read this far! With a bit of time and effort, an attitude of gratitude can greatly improve not only your mental well-being but physical as well. Take the time to find a way to practice daily gratitude and enjoy the infinite blessings.

--To be grateful is to recognize the love of God in everything. --Thomas Merton

--As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them. --John F Kennedy

¹www.innerjudaism.com/post/the-secret-hebrew-meaning-of-gratitude

Upcoming Offerings from the Being New Spirituality Center

Prayer for Peace

Monday, November 16, 10:00-11:00 a.m. [Zoom](#) only

Contemplation is not withdrawal from action, but the source of it. —Thomas Merton

Following a 20-minute sit in Centering Prayer or other silent meditation we will watch and discuss a video strengthening our compassionate presence in action. All are welcome. Bring your prayers, your grief, your hope, your wisdom. This is a collaboration of Being New and COCI.

Sound Healing—

Second and Fourth Mondays at 4:00 Room 105 (lower level). Yoga mats are provided for those who wish to lie down. Bring blankets, eye pillows, etc. There are also comfortable chairs for those who prefer to sit.

Space is limited. Contact [Julie Good](#) JulieGod03@yahoo.com or 515-306-4864 if you plan to attend. Julie is generously offering her time and suggests that instead of a fee, participants may wish to make a donation to the Center. Julie also offers massage therapy and Reiki in her home office.

SoulCollage®

1st & 3rd Mondays in the Center | 6:30-8:30 p.m. | \$15

Join facilitator Cindy Schloss Calhoun and learn to create your own SoulCollage deck with images: a story deck that is yours. It is a powerful way to discover your inner wisdom and find answers to life's questions from within. Email Cindy_sinschloss@aol.com or text 515-238-8828 to find out what it is all about.

First Fridays contemplative gathering. Join us November 6!

9-11 a.m. in Grace Hall

Co-sponsored by Contemplative Outreach of Central Iowa (centeriowa.org) and Being New. All curious seekers are welcome! Questions? Call or text Kathy Reardon at 515-776-0439.

The Way of the Rose: Our Lady of Guadalupe Rosary –

2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 6:30 pm, Room 108 (lower level).

We are an open-hearted, inclusive community dedicated to the forgotten Earth wisdom of the rosary, not affiliated with any religious institution. Traditional and non-traditional prayer, chant, and song forms welcome and no prior knowledge of the rosary is needed. Join us in the calming support available to all in the garden of prayer. Contact: [Hannah Whetston](mailto:hannahwhetston@gmail.com) hannahwhetston@gmail.com for more information

Also available at the Center

- **Enneagram Coaching**, Contact [Julie Honsey](#), honsey.julie@gmail.com Certified in the Narrative Enneagram.
- **Spiritual Direction**, Contact [Deb Richards](mailto:debcarrierrichards@proton.me) debcarrierrichards@proton.me? or [Julie Good](#)
- **Massage and Reiki** with [Julie Good](#), 6077 Bradford Lane, Johnston. Contact her for an appointment, 515-306-4864.
- **Massage Therapy, Reflexology & Reiki** by appointment for those seeking relaxation and balancing. Aromatherapy and guided meditation are included in all session work. Contact [Hannah Whetston](#) 515-505-1878.

Additional details at www.beingnew.org

MINUTES – Grace Congregational Council – September 22nd, 2026

Meeting came to order at 6:10pm Members present – Chuck Denton, Carol Woodruff, Pam Palmer, Pastor Mike Schmidt, Mike Hilsabeck, Vicar Apou Aderbuk, Jessye Flannery, Brian Gerling, Linda Moravec, Tom McCleary Meal – Pam

Call to Order Adoption of Agenda – Mike H moved, Linda seconded, agenda adopted Devotions – Pam

Approval of previous meeting's minutes – Carol moved, Pam seconded, minutes approved “Ideas that will get you fired” – kicked-around various ideas around longer-term plans for the church owned house.

Review/Approval of Staff Reports – tabled as reports have not yet been distributed. They will be distributed and raised for approval via email.

Review/Acceptance of Finance report – Chuck moved to accept the report, Carol seconded, the report accepted

Capital Campaign Update – Current pledges are \$636,067. Current available funds are \$82,744. (as of 9/22). We will need to plan and approve the next projects. Recommendations are to fix the drain line on the south side, address both south and east egresses, and some of the concrete work.

Unfinished Business

Church 100th Anniversary Update – May 22-23, 2027. On Saturday afternoon, we will have a meeting with prior church leaders, along with tours of the church (open to the public). Saturday night will be a catered dinner at Stoney Creek Inn.

Church Finance Audit Update – as part of the final tasks of the audit, this month Larry Nordeen has reviewed 2025 Endowment Fund activity. Mike H has also provided additional 2025 offering data and 2025 GreenState checking, money market, and CD account records.

Recovery Café Facility-Use Update – we continue to look at bids for the architecture and construction work. Recovery Café is also exploring the possibility of an alternative location downtown. Recovery Café and church staff will be meeting with HHS (who provides part of RC's grants) to discuss the use of Misindo Hall.

Staff Support Committee – the group had their initial meeting to review proposed processes and to form ideas on how to proceed. Soon the committee member names will be shared with the congregation.

Revision of the Facility Use Policy – Mike H and Brian are working on an initial draft.

Prayer Garden Update – We are waiting on bids for the concrete and brick work for sidewalks, columbarium, and trash bins surround. Still getting estimates.

Tree removal at 52nd St house – John's Tree Service will start work mid-October and will take approximately 3 weeks.

New Business

Council Nominating Committee - we determined our next council nominating committee – Brian, Tom, and Linda are coming off council this year and will serve on the committee.

Pastor's Healthcare Plan – we discussed health insurance options for the Pastor. The month of October is Portico's health plan enrollment period. They will be sending us the ELCA's selected health plan options for 2027. The council reviews the options and picks the plan it wishes to offer the Pastor for next year. As with prior years, the Pastor intends to waive the offering as he will continue under Jenie's health insurance.

Mike H presented information on moving our accounting software, ACS, to using ACS Technologies hosted-server “On-Demand” package (versus our current local server). This would provide the benefits of access from other locations, avoidance of the current (frequent - daily) data server connection problems, reduced single-point-of failure risks, backup management, and better disaster recovery. This would increase our monthly licensing and support costs by \$182 per month (\$332 to \$514). The council plans to vote on this. However, we first will gather more information on the conversion/startup costs, and get input from the Finance committee.

Stewardship 2027 – looking for a volunteer to put a letter together and do a temple talk.

We have recently been notified by CenturyLink that, effective October 8th, they will no longer support the 2 land lines we have coming into the office. We are working with Harlan Mortenson (who manages our office phone system) and various phone providers to identify alternatives

September Council Minutes, continued from page 9

On-Going Item: Pastor & Council Evaluation – the council is the evaluation document provided by Carol and shared initial feedback on the various areas of ministry – what is done well and what might be opportunities for improvement. This will be a regular ongoing topic at council meetings. Due to time constraints, the topic was tabled for this month.

Action Items

- Brian & Mike H (7/21) – draft a new Facility Use Policy
- Mike H & Pastor (9/22) – will create a multi-year cash flow schedule based on capital campaign pledges
- Mike H (9/22) – will reach out to the Finance Committee concerning the ACS On Demand product. Also, get with ACS to clarify startup costs and effort required.

Adjournment – Linda moved, Chuck seconded, motion carried - the council adjourned at 7:50pm. Our next meeting is on Tuesday, October 27th. Meal – Pastor Mike, Devotions – Jessye.

Finance Report – September Results

Financial results for September YTD are as follows:

- Income – Actual \$300,434, Budget \$308,900, Prior Year \$305,917
- Expenses – Actual \$323,557, Budget \$321,800, Prior Year \$317,139
- Net activity – Actual (\$23,124), Budget (\$12,900), Prior Year (\$11,222)



Activity was below budget and below the prior year. The full year budget is a \$12,500 deficit and the goal is to break even for the year.

Variance from budget is due to pledged offerings below budget. Please ensure that you are current on your pledge, you can contact the church office if you would like to know your pledge status.

Additionally, the Capital Campaign had receipts during the year of \$225,965. Monies were used to fund \$201,472 for roof replacement and \$48,778 for a new HVAC split system.

Bulletins, announcements, and sermons are all online!

For those of you who look for Grace worship materials online, you can find everything on the Bulletins Resource Page. Here's how:

- Go to the website www.gracedm.org. Find the word [Resources](#) — On a laptop or desktop screen it is in the upper right-hand corner. If on your phone, click the 3 lines in the upper right corner, then find Resources, Give, and Volunteer at the bottom of the drop-down menu that appears. Once on the Resources page, look for the red bubble that says Bulletins, Announcements, Sermons. Click to open that page. Once you have the [Bulletins](#) page open, locate the date of the worship you are looking for. You can now open any of the bulleted links related to that date. You may read these online, download to your device, or print as you wish.

Videos currently remain available on a separate page in the Resources section here: [Worship Videos](#). Sermons and Worship videos are posted approximately 24 hours after each worship. We tend to only keep six months' worth of worship material and video links on our pages.

Other helpful links:

Altar Flower Signup — <https://volunteersignup.org/7RXMJ> We invite you to sponsor a bouquet of flowers for the altar. You can include a special message in the bulletin, and the flowers are yours to take home after the worship service on Sunday.

Online Giving — Use our secure site at <https://gracedm.org/give-to-grace> and decide where you want to donate: the general church budget, the Little Free Pantry, the Mission Action Fund, youth, etc. Make a one-time donation or set up a recurring gift.